CHURCH NEWS

FROM THE NORTHERN COUNTRIES

Edited by
THE NORTHERN ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE
Sigtuna, Sweden

Director: Dr. HARRY JOHANSSON, Sigtuna, Sweden
Editor: Rev. JOHS. LANGHOFF, Øster Egesborg per Mern, Denmark

No. 48 May 26th, 1959.

DENMARK

Danish Hesitation with Regard to the Lutheran Radio Station in Africa.

So far the Danish Missionary Council has been rather hesitant with regard to the proposed Lutheran radio station which will probably be situated in Ethiopia. According to the "Kristeligt Dagblad" the reason for this is that one is not altogether satisfied with the station being a purely Lutheran affair. It is pointed out that originally the station was intended as a joint mission enterprise, run by several churches together, and that the first investigations for license and similar matters were done by the ecumenical "Near East Christian Council". Later on the Lutheran World Federation has continued working on the plans and according to a statement to the Norwegian paper "Dagen" by one of the Vice Presidents of the Lutheran World Federation the new sender is to bring "an unabridged Biblical message based on the Lutheran conception". The technical leader of the station is a Lutheran and it is expected that the director will also be a Lutheran.

The Danish Missionary Council would be interested in having also other Churches besides the Lutheran take part in the planning of the programmes and so far no steps have been taken for collecting contributions for the establishment of the radio station.

Theological Agreement Between the Lutheran Churches and the Church of South India.

It has caused attention in Danish church circles that agreement was reached last month at a meeting in Bangalore (India) between theological representatives of the Lutheran Churches and the Church of South India. This piece of information is given in an article in the "Kristeligt Dagblad" by Rev. Kaj Bågø, D.D., who was present in Bangalore at the time of the meeting from April 14th - 16th.

As may be remembered the deliberations of the theological Commission, consisting of representatives of American, German, Danish and Swedish Lutheran Churches respectively as well as of the Church of South India, closed with no results in 1956 as it was felt that the distance was too great between the various conceptions of "The Nature of the Church" which was the main theme of the debates. Since negotiations began in 1950 such subjects as "The Symbolic Books and the Church", "Law and Gospel", "The authority of the Bible" and "The Sacraments"

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Theological Agreement Between the Lutheran Churches and the Church of South India.

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have been dealt with and agreement was reached about all these questions - apart from the doubts expressed by the Missouri Lutheran representatives with regard to the Eucharistic dogmas of the Church of South India.

The termination of negotiations in 1956 was regarded by many as a breakdown, but since then a number of regional conferences have taken place between representatives of the two groups at which the conversations have been conducted, not in English as in the Commission, but in the vernaculars - which proved to be a happy arrangement.

Encouraged by the results of the regional conferences it was decided to call yet another meeting of the Commission concerning "The Nature of the Church" at the United Theological College in Bangalore from April 14th - 16th, and here it proved possible to draw up a resolution acceptable to all parties after the representatives of the Church of South India had convinced the Lutherans that it has no Anglo-Catholic leanings by declaring that neither the Apostolic Succession nor the episcopal office were necessary for the existence of the Church or the validity of the sacraments.

Consequently the Commission considers its work completed and declares that there are no theological reasons for the Lutherans to stay aloof from the Church of South India. Thus it should be possible to work out a common catechism as previously suggested by the Lutherans and to set up a commission for drawing up a common constitution.

If work on a constitution should be begun, however, no doubt new difficulties will crop up, in as much as many Lutherans find it essential that such a constitution should contain the formulation of a creed, something which the Church of South India does not want in order not to establish thereby a new confession.

"Kyrie eleison", "Gloria" and "Alleluia" Reintroduced in the Cathedral of Copenhagen.

Last month the "Vor Frue Kirke" (Church of Our Lady), the Cathedral of Copenhagen, reintroduced "Kyrie eleison" "Gloria" and "Alleluia" in the course of the Sunday service, the two former coming after the first hymn and the latter after the reading of the Epistle. The parts reintroduced were not abolished at the time of the Reformation, but were discontinued during the period of Rationalism (18th century). It is the new organist at the Cathedral, Mr. Mogens Woeldike, who has taken the initiative for this extension of the High Mass, but it has the full approval of the Bishop, the clergymen at the Cathedral, the parochial council and a parish meeting.

Since the "Vor Frue Kirke" for centuries has been regarded as normative for the order of service in the Danish Lutheran Church it may be expected that the parts omitted in the introductory service will be reintroduced also in other churches. The texts are sung in Danish by the congregation, led by the choir. The Liturgical Committee set up on the initiative of the bishops is working on the matter at the moment and will probably publish a report in the near future in which the reintroduction of certain parts omitted in the service will be recommended.

Architects, Theologians and Artists Study Church Architecture.

A number of prominent Danish architects, theologians and artists have started a study circle which is working intensively on the many problems connected with the relationship between church and architecture. Until now the study circle which has been established on the ini-

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tiative of the President of the Clergymen's Association, Dean Johan Exner, Hald, and his son, the young architect Johannes Exner, Copenhagen, have operated on a private basis, but now Mrs. Bodil Koch, Minister of Church Affairs, who attaches so much importance to these problems being really thoroughly studied by experts at this time when so many new churches are being built, has contributed financial means for its activities. At the same time the group has been enlarged to include also representatives of the theological faculties, the Bishops'Council, the Clergymens Association, the Church Foundation of Copenhagen, the National Union of Parochial Councils and the National Association of Danish Architects. The plan is to discuss a number of detailed problems in smaller committees and then, after a debate in plenary meetings, to publish the results.

"Valgmenigheder" and "Independent Congregations" Apply for State Subsidies.

At a meeting last month the Grundtvigian "Valgmenigheder" (congregations formed by voluntary union of a certain number of members of the Danish Lutheran National Church) and "Independent Congregations" (Lutheran congregations not belonging to the Lutheran National Church) which so far have covered their expenses exclusively by voluntary contributions from their members, have decided to apply to Government for financial support. It is pointed out that part of the expenses of the Lutheran National Church are met by State taxation, paid by all citizens, also by members of the "Valgmenigheder" and "Independent Congregations", and that these, although exempted from church taxation, often must pay 3-4 times as much towards their own congregations as they would have done in church taxes if they had remained in the Danish Lutheran National Church.

"Technical Assistance" Opens New Possibilities for Mission Work.

In an article in the "Kristeligt Dagblad" Mr. Jørgen Wangel points out that, at a time when many countries in which foreign missions are working are closing their doors on foreign missionaries or granting entrance permits only in cases where there are no natives to fill their places, new possibilities for preaching are opening up for the Christian Church in connection with the programmes for technical assistance to underdeveloped countries which is sponsored by the United Nations.

The very fact that they are not missionaries by vocation gives the experts in a number of spheres, called in by the Governments of the underdeveloped countries, great opportunities of being witnesses of Christ among the leaders with whom they quite naturally come into contact. Consequently Mr. Wangel suggests that a church working committee be set up which should constantly keep informed about the Danes connected with the assistance programmes, and at the same time the congregations should try to encourage qualified experts with a Christian outlook on life to apply for the jobs. The committee should then, in consultation with the Christian churches in the underdeveloped countries, the missionary societies and other institutions endeavour to give the experts chosen the best possible conditions for being able, directly or indirectly, to act as the working representatives of the Christian faith in their new surroundings.

News in Brief.

- In an article in the "Dansk Kirketidende" the former Minister of Church Affairs, Dean Carl Hermansen, had advocated that a modus vivendi be found so that also Free Church teachers are allowed to teach religion

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Days in Brief.

In an article in the "Danske Kirketidende" the former Minister of
Church Affairs, Dr. Bernhard Harmsen, had advocated that a modus vivendi
be found so that also Free Church teachers are allowed to teach religion

in public schools where, up to now, only members of the Lutheran National Church have been permitted to give such instruction.

- At the annual meeting last month the Danish Baptist Church has elected Rev. Åge Baungård Thomsen, Copenhagen, as its new President. The present President, Rector Henry Gjerrild, will continue as Vice President.

- The "Indre Mission", a pietistically inclined section within the Lutheran National Church, has elected Dean L.P. Jensen, Græstad, President instead of Rev. Christian Bartholdy who has retired on account of age.

- Several churches in Copenhagen have changed the time of morning service on Sundays from the usual 10 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. or 11 a.m. So far thechange seems to have caused an increase in church attendence.

FINLAND

Outcome of Episcopal Election in Helsinki (Helsingfors) Awaited in Suspense.

It is now a fact that the "Suurkirkko" (Storkyrkan) in Helsinki (Helsingfors) is to be the cathedral of the new diocese to be established on July 1st. This has been decreed by the President of Finland in an ordinance published last month. The new Diocese of Helsinki (Helsingfors) will comprise 37 congregations which have hitherto belonged to the Diocese of Tampere (Tammerfors) and the Pojha (Pojo) congregation which is to be established in accordance with an earlier ordinance. The five Swedish speaking congregations in Helsinki (Helsingfors) with some 70 000 members will not be affected by the establishment of the new diocese, as has been mentioned before. They will continue to belong to the Diocese of Borgå (Porvoo).

The election of the Bishop of the new diocese of Helsinki (Helsingfors) took place on May 21st. Dr. Martti Simojoki, now Bishop of Mikkeli (St. Michel) received the highest number of votes, followed by Professor Osmo Tiililä and Professor Aarre Lauha, Helsinki (Helsingfors). The President of the Republic shall appoint one of the three candidates.

Protests Against Purchase Tax on Religious Literature.

Last month the Union of Publishers of Religious Literature, which includes a number of Christian publishing firms in Finland, lodged a protest against the Government plans for introducing purchase tax on religious literature in the taxation, and it is against this point that the protest is directed. The need for spiritual books is great, the protest reads, and these books are suited for the strengthening of public morals, not the least in our time. A rise in prices is supposed to be detrimental to the distribution of the books.

So far 10 Million Finnish Marks for the Missionary Society.

The Jubilee Collection for the Finnish Missionary Society celebrating its centenary this year seems to show a growing interest in the Finnish people for the work of the Society, in as much as it has so far reached the sum of app. 10 million Finnish Marks.

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Student Organization Behind the Spiritual Telephone Service.

It has now been revealed that it is a student organization, viz. the Swedish speaking "Nylands Nation", which is behind the practical arrangement of the spiritual telephone service on No. 666001 in Helsinki (Helsingfors) which has been mentioned before.

Every night from 9 p.m. to 6 p.m. an undergraduate has been present in the office of the organization and, after a short conversation, passed on the calls to the clergyman or doctor or matrimonial adviser on duty or whomever else might be needed in each case.

Most of the problems of those asking for assistance have been of a personal nature, often matrimonial or family problems or problems of alcoholism. In a few cases suicides have been averted.

The Vocational Schools Ought to Have More Christian "Leaven".

Last month a delegation headed by Bishop G.O. Rosenqvist, from the Extended Bishops' Council, has requested of the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Ahti Karjalainen, that the Finnish vocational schools allow more room for a greater Christian contribution than hitherto. It is suggested that, as far as possible, a common morning prayer should be held and that lessons dealing with vital problems of youth should be introduced, such as the ethics of labour, family, education and similar subjects. It is pointed out that many ethical problems and those of a conception of life awaken and just as the instruction of the vocational schools in other spheres aim at being in the closest possible contact with life, so it ought to be also with regard to the spiritual sphere.

The Minister was positively inclined towards the request and it was decided to arrange for a new conference on the matter.

Finnish Church Representatives in the Soviet Union.

Last month a delegation of representatives of the Finnish youth organizations visited the Soviet Union. Among the members of the delegation was also a representative of the Church youth activities, Rev. Simo Palosuo.

ICELAND

Spiritism No Longer Dominant in the Church of Iceland.

In an interview in the Danish "Kristeligt Dagblad" the newly elected Icelandic Bishop, Bishop Sigurbjørn Einarsson, gives a picture of the spiritual situation in Iceland. He emphasizes that the majority of the population is favourably inclined towards the Church and acknowledges its great importance in the historical development, but as regards church attendance and other forms for active participation in the life of the Church he describes the situation as being anything but encouraging. The Bishop feels that this disparity is due, among other things, to the revolution in the Icelandic society during the past 40 years. From being a predominantly agrarian community Iceland has changed into a predominantly urban community and the Church has not been able to keep in step with this rapid development. Consequently the Icelandic Church faces enormous problems which must be seriously considered if it is not to be completely left behind by the new times.

As regards the theological situation Bishop Sigurbjørn Einarsson says that it is undergoing a change. None of the Parties opposing one another at the beginning of the century has been victorious, but from

Student Organisation - Pastoral Work - Student Services.

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other points of view a new oritentation has taken place, a fact which was underlined by the episcopal election not being an election according to Parties. The old fronts about to become static are showing signs of breaking up or at least of movement which the Bishop takes to be a sign of encouragement.

"Spiritism is no longer a dominating factor among clergymen and theologians", he continues. "It has some gifted representatives among the clergy and there are still many ministers who are favourably inclined towards it, partly for scientific reasons - parapsychology now being considered a science - and partly from theological or religious motives. But clergymen seldom attach decisive importance to Spiritism or are spiritually influenced by it". In the population on the whole Spiritism plays a not unimportant part which the Bishop feels is due to the occult tendencies and talents which have always been widespread in the Icelandic nation. The danger of Spiritism is that it may become a religious substitute by undermining the relationship between faith and the revelation of God in Christ.

At the end of the interview Bishop Sigurbjørn Einarsson emphasizes the close relationship which, naturally, exists between the Icelandic Church and the churches in the other Northern countries.

Ordination Bishop Fridrik J. Rafnar Dead.

At the age of 68 Ordination Bishop Fridrik J. Rafnar, Akureyri, of the Diocese of Holar has died. He was consecrated Ordination Bishop in 1937.

NORWAY

The Church as the Leaven in World Politics.

In a lecture in the Student Association in Oslo last month on "The Church in the International Situation" Bishop Karl Marthinussen, Stavanger, said that the task of the Church is not to supply ready-made solutions to the many topical international problems, but by the power of the Word to act as an inspiration to those who take part in world politics.

The Bishop drew attention to the fact that the idea of evolution was the creed of academical scholars at the time of his own years as a student, but while expectations had been quite fulfilled with regard to technology it had proved to be a mistake to believe that progress should make man better. As a result of the experiences of this generation our time has become an era of fear here in the West and this fear is due to our culture living in a religiously empty space. But culture cannot exist without faith. For that reason in future the choice must be between Christianity and Communism, and Communism in its most radical form, at that.

"The Church must live in the world", the Bishop continued. "Therefore the distress of the world is the distress of the Church, and the challenge of the situation is also a challenge to the Church. The only weapon of the Church is the Word and the Church will be forced to give up all positions of power as time goes on. But at exactly that point the Church will be able to act as a leaven of inspiration and to work for the principles contained in the Gospel and for the consequences arising out of the Gospel also in international relations." In this connection the Bishop mentioned a number of valuable points of view contributed by the Church to the present debate, such as the eternal

aspect of man, his relations with the State and the masses, the feeling of global solidarity and freedom and peace based on the idea of justice and atonement. The Bishop also emphasized the two things which the Church may give the world: the will to face the situation without any illusions and the courage to believe.

Prominent Church Member Warns Against Church Plays.

According to their nature church plays are theatre and consequently do not belong in church, least of all in an Evangelical church, it is maintained by the "Indre Mission" (Home Mission) clergyman, Rev. Fredrik Wislöff. His views are given in an article in the Christian daily paper in Oslo "Vårt Land" as a contribution to the lively discussion going on in church circles about the justification of church plays. The occasion is the forming of an association of people interested in church plays which, on the Swedish pattern, goes in for liturgic plays.

Taking his starting point in a church play of this kind, viz. Finn Jor's "King of Kings" which was performed in Oslo during the Easter Week Festival, Rev. Wislöff describes the quandary of this and other church plays as that of, on one side, not being satisfied with a liturgic play - which would be too tedious and strange in Norway where High Church tendencies are very inconspicuous - nor, on the other, of having the courage or the will to perform a real play, but, nevertheless, ending up by doing so anyway.

In Rev. Wislöff's opinion the church plays do not express a true Christian message and in any case they must be more difficult to grasp for those people, unfamiliar with the church with whom one wants to get into contact than a simple sermon which explains and elucidates the text. The criticism concludes with the wish that the church plays do not gain foothold in the Norwegian Church. "They seem to me to be inferior from a Christian, a church, as well as an artistic point of view" Rev. Wislöff declares.

Several churchmen have expressed themselves on the same lines as Rev. Wisloff, and his views are shared also by the Christian daily paper in Bergen "Dagen". A number of others, on the other hand, defend the justification of church plays as being an extremely practical way of illustrating the thoughts of the Gospel for modern people who have become used, not only to listening, but also to watching.

Warning Against "Political" Episcopal Election.

Next autumn Bishop W. Krohn-Hansen of the Diocese of Sör-Hålogaland will be 70, and the local newspapers are already busy giving the Diocesan Council good advice with regard to whom to nominate as candidates and why.

Thus the Labour Party organ "Nordlands Framtid" recommends a certain clergyman with the motivation that "in many respects he is on the same wave-length as the Labour regime although being critical of the Labour Movement in a few matters."

This gives the two Christian daily papers "Dagen" in Bergen and "Vårt Land" in Oslo occasion to warn against making the episcopal election a matter of politics. They describe it as being indecent to make political demands on an episcopal candidate and regard it as compromising for a Party that its organ can write in this way.

American Congregation Founded in Oslo.

At a meeting last month an American congregation belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church was founded in Oslo. As soon as possible the congregation will erect its own church.

125 000 Norwegian Crowns Collected for Madagascar.

A collection sponsored by the Christian daily paper in Oslo "Vårt Land" for those in distress on account of floods in Madagascar has resulted in more than 125 000 Norwegian Crowns. Norway supports an extensive foreign mission activity on Madagascar.

The Zulu Church Elects African Head.

For the first time the Synod of the Norwegian Mission Church in Zulu-land in South Africa last month elected a native President of the Church, viz. Rev. Kilbow Msomi.

SWEDEN

The Swedish Church Approaching a New Time of Unrest?

Last month two representatives of Swedish church life visited Norway and during their stay they commented on Swedish church problems.

Bishop Bo Giertz, Gothenburg, who is the leader of the so-called "Confessional Front" addressed a meeting of the "Bekendelsestro Præsters Broderskab" (Brotherhood of Clergymen Faithful to the Confession) in Oslo and, among other things, said that what has happened in Sweden so far is only the preliminary disagreements between a confessional church and a secularized majority which, although nominally belonging to the Swedish Lutheran National Church, finds something objectionable in even fundamental Christian truths. "I should be much surprised", the Bishop said, "if we, in the near future, are not faced with a far more serious struggle than up to now", and went on to say that the controversy about women pastors is not the most important one, but the questions of the Bible being the word of God and of faithfulness to Holy Script. In this matter there are two opposing points of view: one which believes that the Scriptures are given us by God, and one which believes that the Bible does contain the word of God, but not that it is the word of God. The latter is actually a liberal conception, reckoning with a standard beyond Holy Script by which it should be judged.

Head of the St. Catherine's Foundation, Dr. Margit Sahlin, was also in Oslo in order to give a lecture at the Church Academy, and the daily paper "Vårt Land" asked her to comment on the Bishop's views on the Bible. Her reply was:

"They isolate the Church from people of our time in their agony of souls. We do not believe that public opinion should be decisive for the teachings of the Church. But just as words may change their meaning so may also ideas. Conceptions of faith cannot float in thin air. They must be related to the existing social circumstances. The circumstances of the Church are quite different to-day from those at the time of Jesus. We must put into thought the reality of the word of God in this situation so that men may be helped to live now."

Having this point of view she also maintained that it must be possible for women of to-day to take holy orders, while at the same time stating that she herself had not asked to be ordained in order not to cause unnecessary controversies and difficulties in the Swedish Church and in consideration of the St. Catherine's Foundation.

Government Refuses Adaptation of Luther's Catechism.

The Swedish Government has refused a request by the Church Assembly in 1957 for a pedagogical adaptation of Luther's shorter catechism so that it would be more suited for teaching purposes than the present version which from both a pedagogical as well as a linguistic point of view is obsolete at many points.

The reason for the refusal is a statement by the highest school authorities which points out that the catechism is studied as a document pertaining to church history in the course of study of the history of Christianity, while at no point in the school instruction it is used as a text-book in the Christian conception of faith or outlook on life.

At the same time Government has left it to the Bishops' Conference to decide on a possible adaptation of the doctrine in order to facilitate the instruction of the church itself in accordance with modern teaching methodology.

Church Study Delegation Invited to the Soviet Union.

A private study delegation of five has been invited to be the guests of the Russian Orthodox Church for a fortnight. The delegation is to study the life of the Orthodox Church in general and Russian sacred music in particular. The delegation consists of Dean Olle Herrlin, Uppsala, Mr. Henry Weman, cathedral organist, Uppsala, Dr. Bertil Gärtner, lecturer, Uppsala, Rev. Christofer Klasson, Länna, and Dr. Eric Segelberg, Uppsala.

Nation-Wide Campaign for Raising the Level of Public Morals.

One of the permanent committees of the Swedish Parliament has taken the initiative in planning a nation-wide campaign for raising the level of public morals, predominantly among young people. The idea is to engage parents and teachers in particular in this drive in which television, radio and press all of them will be employed. Further details of the campaign have not yet been planned.

Government of South Africa Takes Over 6 Swedish Hospitals.

Among the 22 hospitals for non-whites in non-white areas in Transvaal of which the South African Government has decided to take control no less than 6 belong to Swedish missionary societies, viz. 3 to the Church of Sweden Mission, 1 to "Helgelseförbundet" (Holiness Union), 1 to the Free Baptist Mission and 1 to the Swedish Alliance Mission.

So far it is expected that the doctors and nurses employed at the hospitals will be allowed to continue their work, but as yet the consequences of the new rules of control are not known.

Proposal for the Joint Training of Theologians of 4 Free Churches.

In an article in the free church magazine "Svensk Veckotidning" the prominent free church member, Rev. Thorvald Källstad, who is employed as instructor at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Gothenburg, has proposed that a theological education common to the 4 Free Churches having a 4-years' training course of future ministers, viz. the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, the Mission Covenant Church and the "Örebro Missionsförening" (a free Baptist community), should be established.

An investigation has shown that the theological training of the four denominations is practically parallel, apart from the instruction in the history of the various denominations respectively, their doctrines and organization; and he points out that a joint theological training would raise the standard and at the same time reduce the cost. The instruction special to each denomination might then be given separately.

The proposer feels that any fear of such an arrangement weakening the characteristics of the denominations is due to considerations of prestige which ought to be overcome. Pedagogical as well as financial, ecumenical and social considerations all of them encourage a serious contemplation of the proposal. In this connection Rev. Källstad refers to the fruitful cooperation already existing among the Free Churches, such as, for instance, their joint study association and the Clergymen's Institute for advanced studies.

In an article in the periodical "Tro och Liv" another free church member, Mr. Sven Hemrin, who taches at the Theological Seminary of the Mission Covenant Church, suggests that the instruction at the theological faculties of the Universities should be made undenominational. The future ministers of the Lutheran National Church as well as of the Free Churches should follow this as well as a special instruction of a confessional character as ordained by each denomination individually.

Lively Debate on Free Church Ecumenicity.

During the past few months a lively discussion has been going on in Sweden among the various Free Churches. Eight of them are members of the "Frikyrkliga Samarbetskommittén"(Free Church Joint Committee) and since the attempt at transforming this Board into a real Free Church union had to be abandoned in 1953 - only 3 denominations, the Mission Covenant Church, the Baptist Church and the Methodist Church, being in favour - the question of a closer connection has been somewhat pushed in the background. But in practical matters a fruitful cooperation has developed as, for instance, with regard to studies, press service and film enterprises.

However, a proposal was brought in at a meeting in Stockholm of representatives of the Mission Covenant Church, the Baptist Church and the Methodist Church that these three denominations should go together in a Free Church Union while at the same time maintaining the present contact with the other Free Church denominations in the Joint Committee. This proposal was received with acclamation by the organ of the Mission Covenant Church "Svensk Veckotidning", while the two Baptist leaders Dr. Erik Rudén, Mission Director, and Professor Gunnar Westin have protested strongly, in as much as it is feared that the wider free church cooperation might be seriously endangered if three of the denominations alone united in a Free Church Union.

In the Baptist Church new ideas have been expressed with regard to Baptism as a condition of membership of a local Baptist congregation. Some younger Baptist theologians think that if, for instance, a member of the Mission Covenant Church who was baptized as an infant were to move to a place where there is only a Baptist congregation he should be admitted to so called "associative membership", i.e. he keeps a loose contact with his old Church but is active in the congregation, where he is in "associative membership". Rev. Joel Sörenson, the well-known Baptist minister, has taken one step further. He has suggested the idea of "open membership". Dr. Rudén, and Rev. Lewi Pethrus, the

An investigation has shown that the theological training of the four denominations is uneventfully overall, apart from the instruction in the History of the various denominations respectively, their dogmas and organisation; and he points out that a joint theological training would raise the standard and at the same time reduce the cost. The instruction special to each denomination might then be given separately.

The proposer feels that any fear of such an arrangement reducing the characteristics of the denominations is due to misinformation or prejudice which ought to be overcome. Proposed as well as Finnish, economical and social considerations all of them encourage a serious consideration of the proposal. In this connection Rev. Fellman refers to the fruitful cooperation already existing among the Free Churches, such as, for instance, their joint study association and the Christian Institute for advanced studies.

In an article in the periodical "Ung folk" another Free church member, Mr. Sven Hunting, who teaches at the Theological Seminary of the Mission Covenant Church, suggests that the Institution at the theological faculties of the Universities should be made undenominational. The future ministers of the Lutheran National Church as well as of the Free Churches should follow this as well as a special course in a confessional character as defined by each denomination individually.

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However a proposal was brought in at a meeting in Stockholm of representatives of the Mission Covenant Church, the Baptist Church and the Methodist Church that these bodies should be combined together in a Free Church Union with at the same time maintaining the present contact with the other Free Church denominations in the joint Committee. This proposal was rejected and accordingly the open of the Mission Covenant Church "Svensk Tidskrift" wrote the two Baptist leaders Dr. Berg and Mission Director, and Professor Tunberg Westin have probably attempt, in as much as it is feared that a wider free church cooperation might be certainly endangered if some of the denominations joined in a Free Church Union.

In the Baptist Church now ideas have been expressed with regard to Baptism as a condition for membership of a local Baptist congregation. Some younger Baptists have also given thought that if, for instance, a member of the Mission Covenant Church has been baptized as an infant were he to move to a place where there is only a Baptist congregation he should be entitled to so called "association membership". Also, he keeps a lodge contact with his old church but is entitled in the congregation where he is in "associative membership". Only local Baptists, the well-known Baptist minister, Mr. Ekman was when Chairman, he has expressed the idea of "open membership", Dr. Ekman, and Mr. Josef Tejhrina, the

former leader of the Pentecostal Mission, have both strongly dissociated themselves from these suggestions. They feel that baptism of believers must also in the future be the condition of membership of a Baptist congregation.

News in Brief.

- This summer Archbishop Gunnar Hultgren will visit England and next year the Archbishop of Canterbury is expected in Sweden.

- The Swedish Mission Covenant Church is planning the erection of no less than 14 churches in the suburbs of Stockholm during the next few years.

- The New Testament has been recorded on reels of tape in more than 1 000 copies for the use of blind people in Sweden. Ordinary books recorded on tape are usually available in only 6 copies. The Swedish Bible Society has taken the initiative for the recording.

- The Board of the Baptist Church has suggested that, at the annual conference in June, Rev. Simon Öberg, Stockholm, be elected Mission Director as from October 1st instead of Dr. Erik Rudén who is going to London in the autumn to act as Secretary for Europe of the Baptist World Alliance.

- Rev. Einar Thurfjell has been appointed Mission Director of the Evangelical National Missionary Society from July 1st after Rev. Nils Dahlberg who has reached the retirement age. Rev. Thurfjell is now Secretary for the Foreign Mission.

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